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ABSTRACT

A resource person in undergraduate education classes may promote insights into the challenges, successes, and frustrations associated with the development and implementation of elementary curriculum. Resource persons may come from the university, the public school system, or the service and business professions in the community. The direct benefits of the resource person include: (a) sharing unique, specialized knowledge and experiences; (b) sharing instructional media including audiovisual hardware and software, as well as published, teacher-designed, and teacher-constructed instructional materials; (c) sharing divergent philosophies; (d) providing possible role models; (e) identifying possible options and goals for future career growth; (f) stimulating a realistic approach to educational problems; and (g) providing simulations of selected professional situations. An indirect benefit resulting from the use of resource persons in the elementary education class is the improved relationship between the college or university and the institution to which the resource person belongs. (HMD)

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The Resource Person in Elementary Teacher Education

Today's instructor of professional elementary education courses is confronted with the immense challenge of providing realism in his instruction of prospective teachers. This realism has been facilitated through such varied techniques as film simulations and videotaping of teaching performance, field trips, and observation-participation experiences in elementary classrooms.

As a supplement to these approaches, the resource person in education classes may promote insights into the challenges, successes, and frustrations associated with the development and implementation of the elementary curriculum. The values which may be derived from the participation of resource persons in education classes accrue not only to the university and it's students but also to the numerous sources from which the resource persons have been recruited.

Some of the values to be gained from the resource person's interaction with the education students are indirect. These contacts may stimulate improved public relations not only between the university and the public schools but also between the university and the larger community. The invitation of a resource person to visit an education class is an acknowledgment of that person's

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capability to add a unique dimension of realism which may not be achieved by the instructor unassisted. The implicit message to the university student is that the acquisition of essential aspects of teacher education is dependent upon contacts with key individuals in the field. It is probable that the resource person, following his visit with university students will share his impressions of the education class with his colleagues in the public schools and community, thus furthering the image of the college student as a concerned and committed individual. Students who have made this impression may be more likely to be welcomed as observors, participants and student teachers in the community schools. Another conceivable indirect benefit is that the student may perceive as a model the instructor who successfully uses resource persons. The student who has observed the effective use of resource persons in the college classroom may more readily identify and utilize appropriate resource persons to supplement his instruction in the elementary classroom.

The direct benefits of the resource persons' visits are limited only by the imagination and initiative of the instructor who makes the selection and guides the planning with the assistance of students. In realizing selected objectives of an education course, the resource person may contribute in various ways such as:

1. Sharing unique and specialized knowledge and experience
2. Sharing instructional media including audio-visual hardware and software and published as well as teacher-designed and constructed instructional materials

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3. Sharing divergent philosophies and viewpoints

4. Providing possible role models

5. Identifying possible options and goals for future career growth and development

6. Providing an unthreatening atmosphere for open discussion of crucial educational issues

7. Stimulating a realistic approach to educational problems

8. Providing simulations of selected professional situations

In return, the resource persons may profit from their contributions. They may be able to advance the acceptance and adoption of some of their creative innovations to a receptive population. Furthermore, concerned and capable students with challenging and insightful reactions may stimulate the resource person to re-examine and possibly modify some of their positions.

Good resource persons come not only from public school systems but from other community facilities with an educational component as well. Every community has a wealth of potential resource persons, some of whom may be relatively unique to a particular community. As the education instructor becomes involved with the public schools and the community, these individuals may be discovered.

Children as resource persons are available in every community. With appropriate arrangements, small groups of children may visit the university classroom for demonstration purposes. Their responses to selected instructional techniques may be critically observed by the prospective teachers. Some

appropriate small group activities are:

1. Writing a creative story
2. Drawing a picture
3. Dramatizing an incident
4. Role-playing a situation
5. Performing a simple science experiment
6. Reporting on a book or an author
7. Reinforcing a specific reading skill
8. Discussing an issue in social studies
9. Responding to questions requiring both convergent and divergent thinking to illustrate the contrast

The children's visit to a college campus could be planned to have implications for career education. It could provide them with an opportunity to observe one aspect of the adult world.

Public school personnel in their various roles as classroom teachers, specialists and administrators are especially valuable resource persons. Classroom teachers may vividly describe experiences related to teaching (a) the educable mentally retarded, (b) the physically handicapped, (c) the culturally disadvantaged, (d) the bilingual, and (e) preschool-kindergarten children. Elementary teachers who have effectively utilized individualized instruction or are experimenting with the open classroom may share their instructional approaches. Occasionally, a panel discussions are the most effective method of presentation. For example, several teachers who team teach

in an open classroom might describe their procedures for planning, instruction and evaluation. Or, several teachers of children from a wide range of age levels might compare and contrast children's growth and development at the different age levels.

Those specialists who are supportive of the classroom teacher's role may describe their roles and responsibilities as they relate to the elementary curriculum. Among those who could provide worthwhile contributions are: (a) various subject matter specialists, (b) speech therapists, (c) elementary guidance counselors, (d) school nurses, (e) school psychologists, and (f) home-school coordinators.

Elementary administrators may clarify their roles as instructional leaders. They may preview for prospective teachers the nature of (a) inservice education, (b) the adoption of curriculum modifications, and (c) the evaluation (including self-evaluation) of teaching performance. Administrators may even simulate job interviews for students who are nearing the completion of their training.

The education instructor may supplement his instruction with the contributions of resource persons from within his institution as well as from other intitutions.

From within his institution, the specialized education librarian may acquaint the students with important reference materials in education and related fields. Audio-visual media personnel may demonstrate the use of and guide the students' initial operation of a wide range of equipment.

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The skills, specializations and interests of faculty members outside of elementary education may provide enrichment. Examples of possible contributors are:

1. An educational psychologist who has conducted research related to child development, e.g., the development of creativity or language development
2. A social worker with experience and knowledge related to the impact of the family situation upon the child's development
3. A sociologist with a specialization in Black Studies in the elementary curriculum
4. An economist or anthropologist who have analyzed concepts in their respective fields for their appropriate application to the elementary social studies curriculum.
5. A linguistics specialist acquainted with the theory and rationale of the new grammar
6. An artist familiar with the styles and types of media used in illustrations of children's picture books

Frequently the resource person and the instructor may team teach. This is particularly appropriate when the specializations of the team are closely allied such as in the following situations:

1. A children's literature instructor visits a social studies methods class to share literature which would both directly and indirectly promote the attainment of specified social studies objectives, e.g., ecological values and concepts, understanding of minority group problems or psychological problems
2. A social studies methods instructor visits a children's literature class to share poetry anthologies, informational books, biographies, and historical fiction collected for a unit on the civil war, for example.
3. A reading methods instructor with a special competence in critical reading methods shares suggestions for the development of pertinent critical reading skills with methods classes in science, social studies, or children's literature

Companies publishing textbooks and other instructional

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materials welcome opportunities to send representatives to speak with prospective teachers. Often these representatives have considerable experience plus specialized graduate training in the area related to the instructional materials they are promoting. These resource persons may articulately give an account of the development and the suggested use of their materials. In recognition of the current trend toward a multi-media approach to learning, they may exhibit samples of various media to demonstrate their coordination and proper selection to meet individual children's needs. Companies which have developed and produced audio-visual media are eager to demonstrate their most recent developments in hardware and software to prospective customers. This acquaints students with innovations in the rapidly changing field of audio-visual media.

Students may benefit from the visits of two representatives from companies publishing very different programs. For example, a structured and unstructured early childhood education program may be compared and contrasted. As students are confronted with various programs, they may examine such questions as: (a) How do different programs approach similar and/or divergent objectives? (b) What is the rationale for their program based upon their philosophy? These experiences in evaluating instructional materials may provide bases for later decision making when the students are classroom teachers serving on textbook selection committees.

The performance of essential educational services is not limited to the public schools. The identification and utilization of resource persons who are performing these services may promote communication between the university and the community.

The Head Start director, teacher, or parent-coordinator may share their experiences with child development or preschool methods classes. The director or teachers from a Montessori school may describe Montessori's philosophy, theories, methods and materials perhaps preceding a class field trip to a Montessori school. The boom in day care centers deserves recognition. Students concerned with the preschooler may become familiar with some typical day care programs through the visit of a day care center employee. As a consequence of these resource persons' contributions, some prospective teachers might become sufficiently interested in the young child to decide to pursue a career in the rapidly expanding field of preschool education.

The social worker employed by a welfare agency to assist families with problems may be an important source of information pertinent to understanding children. This resource person could share his knowledge of the types of home situations with which some children are confronted and the kind of assistance provided for them by the welfare agency. Their coordinative efforts with the public schools may be explored.

The prospective teacher needs to be cognizant of the nature and extent of the drug abuse problem among children.

A reputable source of this information is a representative of the police department. Such an individual may share informative films and regalia and report actual examples of tragic situations related to drug abuse among elementary school children. In those communities where the police department working in conjunction with the public schools has designed a drug education program, the scope and sequence of this curriculum may be presented.

In nearly all communities the public library provides valuable educational services for children. This is accomplished both independently and cooperatively with the public schools. The children's librarian visiting the children's literature class as a resource person may

1. Tell a children's story, thus providing a model for aspiring storytellers.
2. Present the library's criteria for choosing children's books for purchase.
3. Identify the specific books which are most popular with children at different age levels.
4. Share techniques for motivating children to select and read high quality literature.
5. Review recent publications of children's books acquired by the library.
6. Explain the library's policy relative to purchasing "controversial" children's books.
7. Explain the public library's coordination of efforts with the public school.

The recent incorporation of environmental education in the elementary curriculum is exemplified in the growth of outdoor education programs. In a community fortunate enough to have such a program, the director or teachers of such a

program may accomplish several objectives from a visit to an elementary science or social studies methods class. These might include:

1. Describing environmental education activities which actually benefit the community
2. Stimulating interest among students who are potential participants or student teachers in the program
3. Sharing techniques of incorporating aspects of outdoor edueation in the elementary classroom
4. Identifying the advantages to be derived from the openness and informality of an outdoor education program
5. Deseribing the cooprdination of the outdoor edueation program with the elementary curriculum

It is apparent from a survey of these illustrations and suggestions that each teacher educator must make his own identifieations and seleetions of resource persons based upon needs, interests and availability.

To facilitate the identification and selection of resource persons, it would be advisable for departments of elementary education to maintain a current file of such pertinent information related to each resource person as:

1. Their professional title, address, and telephone number
2. A brief summary of their oral presentation and media
3. A brief summary of their unique experiences, roles and responsibilities
4. The specific preparation which the resource person may expect from the instructor and/or students
5. The name(s) of other resource person(s) with whom they might team

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This file of resource persons becomes increasingly useful as more potential resource persons are identified through instructors' and students' contacts with the public schools and the community and through the recommendations of current resource persons. Students need to be continuously encouraged to recommend classroom teachers and other professionals with whom they may be in contact who have special competencies which could be shared for the benefit of prospective teachers.

Although the concern of this article has been with the utilization of resource persons in undergraduate teacher education, it is imperative that classroom teachers who are participating in inservice training including graduate education be exposed to and encouraged to interact with resource persons representing a variety of backgrounds and viewpoints.